

Volunteer Monitoring of Indian Creek:

Eyes On Indian Creek – October 18, 2002

What is water quality monitoring?

Have you ever wondered how we get information on our rivers, streams, and lakes? How do we know when waters are safe to swim or boat in -- or to drink from? How do we know when waters are safe for fish and wildlife? The answer to these questions is **monitoring**. By sampling and testing water we can answer these and many other questions about the health of our aquatic ecosystems. For example, water quality monitoring data indicates that dissolved oxygen, essential for healthy fish, has improved in Indian Creek over the past four years.

Volunteer monitoring is a program of routine monitoring of the environment and streams by community volunteers who are interested in the health of streams and the surrounding watershed. Activities might include collecting samples for water quality testing, evaluating fish habitat, counting birds or making visual observations of stream health. Information collected from monitoring can be used by the community and by local resource managers to better protect our environment and residents.

Why is volunteer monitoring important?

- ❖ Strengthens public awareness of our natural environment
- ❖ Provides invaluable **information** to:
 - Rekindle public stewardship for our streams and watersheds

- Identify problems and celebrate improvements of the overall stream health
- Supplement and fill gaps in data collected by governmental and private agencies
- Involve and educate young people in the conservation of our stream ecosystems



Students from Albertson College of Idaho monitoring the water quality of Indian Creek

What are we monitoring in Indian Creek?

On **October 18th** we are beginning to monitor the following water quality conditions: temperature, current velocity, E. coli (bacteria) levels, phosphorus, nitrogen, and suspended sediments. Water quality sampling will

be done twice monthly for a 1-year period. Our next water sampling day will be **November 1st**. This information will be helpful in establishing baseline information for future restoration projects in the Indian Creek watershed.

How can I get involved?

The 'Friends of Indian Creek' is just getting started. In conjunction with students and faculty from Albertson College of Idaho and personnel from the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, we are launching a volunteer monitoring program. **Eyes On Indian Creek** on October 18th was our kickoff event.

To lend a hand or make a donation to Friends of Indian Creek, contact Lucinda Tyler, President, at Lucindatyler@msn.com.



Albertson College of Idaho students wading in Indian Creek while gathering water quality data

Please contact Dr. Chris Walser, Albertson College of Idaho, for more information about on-going water quality monitoring efforts on Indian Creek (cwalser@albertson.edu or [208] 459-5632).

This fact sheet was produced in partnership with the City of Caldwell, Mayor's Core Area Committee, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, COMPASS, National Park Service's Rivers and Trails Program, Albertson College of Idaho, Friends of Indian Creek, and Idaho Department of Environmental Quality.